

Mr. Chairman and member of the committee my name is Jon Stoner I am a farmer from Havre Montana I am currently the Past President of the Montana Grain Growers Association.

We stand in support of house bill 432. The wheat and barley industries are the Montana Grain Growers main focus but many of our members are also oil seed producers or may well be oil seed producers in the future.

Passage of this bill just makes sense. Renewable fuels have a bright future they are consumer and environmentally friendly. Can we guarantee that the renewable fuels industry is going to be successful in Montana, no but we have a great shot at being successful in bio-fuels production.

1. Agriculture is a very competitive industry internationally and interstate We can compete with other states in per acre oil production, example soybeans have 20% oil content and canola/camolina/safflower have 40+ % so even with lower yielding crops we have equal or greater oil
2. Bio-diesel has the highest energy balance averaging 1 unit input to 3.2 units output
3. Bio-diesel can be produced efficiently on a small scale and can be easily blended with regular diesel. This can readily lead to extra economic activity in rural areas. I am currently a partner in a small oil-seed crush facility in Malta Montana we are concentrating on bio-lubricants. We employ a few people and have real reason to believe the renewable fuels industry offers great opportunities.
4. The bio-fuels industry is a growth industry improvements in plant genetics and production facilities happen every year. Montana really needs to be part of this industry

I believe the way this bill requires production benchmarks before requiring blending percentages is a great way to support this industry and there are safe guards to nullify the requirement if the bio-fuel does not meet standards.

There will always be problems to work out, and they will be worked out. I have talked to my fuel supplier several times in the last couple of years about the availability of diesel fuel. He has told me that they have been on like 85% allocation meaning they have not been able to get all the fuel they have quota for and several times their tanks have been close to running out, we have not had a problem sourcing fuel yet but I believe local production of bio-fuels just makes sense.

Please vote yes on house bill 432 you will be supporting agriculture Montanans' number one industry and we will be helping the United States become one step closer to energy independence.